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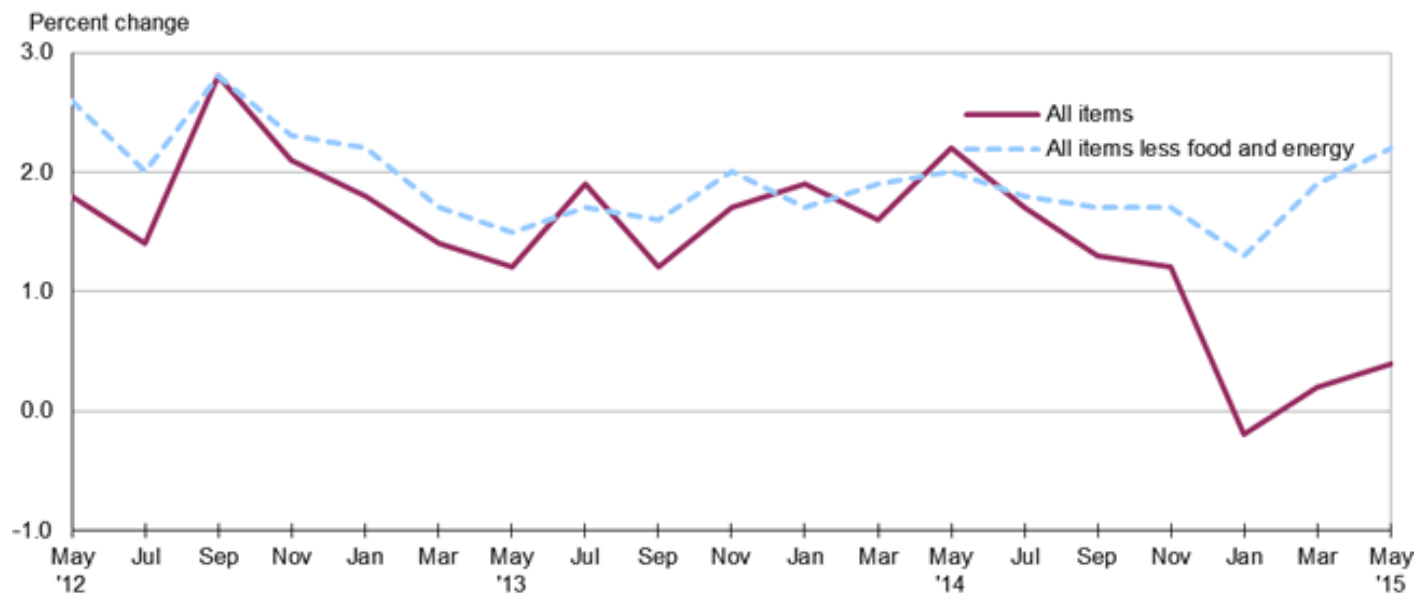
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Baltimore – May 2015

Area prices up 0.6 percent since March and 0.4 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Baltimore increased 0.6 percent over the last two months, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted the rise was led by a 0.5-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. The energy index and the food index also rose since March, up 1.8 and 0.4 percent, respectively. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U edged up 0.4 percent, due almost entirely to a 2.2-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since May 2014, the food index rose 0.8 percent, while the energy index dropped 17.8 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington, D.C., May 2012–May 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

After declining 0.7 percent in March, the food index increased 0.4 percent over the last two months. Both components of the food index—food at home and food away from home—also increased 0.4 percent since March. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for various items including frozen fruits and vegetables, coffee, and fresh fish and seafood.

Food prices rose 0.8 percent over the year, reflecting higher prices for food away from home (2.4 percent). Conversely, prices for food at home declined 0.5 percent since last May.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, rose 1.8 percent since March, due to an 8.1-percent advance in gasoline prices. Electricity and utility (piped) gas service prices were lower over the last two months, down 3.2 and 5.2 percent, respectively.

Energy prices fell 17.8 percent over the year, led by a 27.4-percent drop in gasoline prices. Electricity and utility (piped) gas service prices also declined since May 2014, down 4.3 and 6.1 percent, respectively.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.5 percent since March. The advance reflected price increases for medical care and shelter, up 1.8 and 0.3 percent, respectively. Moderating the rise in the all items less food and energy index were lower prices for apparel, down 3.9 percent over the last two months.

Since May 2014, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.2 percent. The increase was due largely to an over-the-year rise in shelter prices (3.2 percent), as the owners' equivalent rent of residences index was up 3.3 percent. Lower prices for other goods and services (-0.8 percent) moderated the increase in the all items less food and energy index since last May.

Table A. Washington, D.C. CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
January.....	1.0	2.3	0.4	2.7	0.1	1.8	0.4	1.9	-1.0	-0.2
March.....	1.2	3.0	1.3	2.8	0.9	1.4	0.6	1.6	1.0	0.2
May.....	1.0	3.9	0.1	1.8	-0.2	1.2	0.4	2.2	0.6	0.4
July.....	0.1	4.1	-0.2	1.4	0.5	1.9	0.0	1.7		
September.....	-0.1	3.4	1.3	2.8	0.6	1.2	0.2	1.3		
November.....	-0.1	3.3	-0.7	2.1	-0.2	1.7	-0.4	1.2		

The Consumer Price Index for July 2015 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 19, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Washington-Baltimore is published bi-monthly. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 89 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 28 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 4,000 housing units and approximately 26,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch17_a.htm.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **Note:Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Washington in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the counties of Berkeley and Jefferson in West Virginia.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015	May 2015	May 2014	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015
All items ⁽¹⁾		154.984		155.880	0.4	0.6	
Food and beverages ⁽¹⁾		154.709		155.349	1.0	0.4	
Food ⁽¹⁾		156.010		156.594	0.8	0.4	
Food at home.....		147.292	147.629	147.854	-0.5	0.4	0.2
Food away from home ⁽²⁾		164.398		164.999	2.4	0.4	
Alcoholic beverages ⁽²⁾		136.199		137.398	3.5	0.9	
Housing ⁽¹⁾		166.786		166.864	2.3	0.0	
Shelter.....		178.005	178.263	178.613	3.2	0.3	0.2
Rent of primary residence ^{(1) (3)}		197.785	198.421	198.462	3.8	0.3	0.0
Owners' equivalent rent of residences ^{(3) (4)}		178.172	178.529	178.247	3.3	0.0	-0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{(3) (4)}		178.173	178.533	178.257	3.3	0.0	-0.2
Fuels and utilities.....		183.031		177.753	-3.6	-2.9	
Household energy.....		174.635	169.703	168.382	-5.6	-3.6	-0.8
Gas (piped) and electricity ⁽³⁾		167.108	162.278	160.999	-4.7	-3.7	-0.8
Electricity ⁽³⁾		172.946	169.304	167.420	-4.3	-3.2	-1.1
Utility (piped) gas service ⁽³⁾		130.633	123.411	123.836	-6.1	-5.2	0.3
Household furnishings and operations.....		89.369		89.772	0.0	0.5	
Apparel ⁽¹⁾		101.091		97.189	0.0	-3.9	
Transportation ⁽¹⁾		142.206		146.550	-8.3	3.1	
Private transportation.....		139.711		142.213	-9.5	1.8	
Motor fuel.....		208.216	207.046	224.802	-27.4	8.0	8.6
Gasoline (all types).....		207.696	206.573	224.447	-27.4	8.1	8.7
Gasoline, unleaded regular ⁽⁵⁾		207.610	206.512	225.339	-28.1	8.5	9.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ⁽⁵⁾		214.153	213.692	228.866	-25.4	6.9	7.1

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Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015	May 2015	May 2014	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015
Gasoline, unleaded premium ⁽⁵⁾		219.348	218.448	233.323	-24.7	6.4	6.8
Medical care ⁽¹⁾		176.951		180.135	5.3	1.8	
Recreation		118.589		119.188	1.4	0.5	
Education and communication		147.572		148.198	2.1	0.4	
Other goods and services ⁽¹⁾		176.768		178.352	-0.8	0.9	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		126.714		127.808	-3.6	0.9	
Commodities less food and beverages		111.332		112.658	-6.7	1.2	
Nondurables less food and beverages		139.762		141.842	-9.5	1.5	
Durables		80.834		81.423	-2.1	0.7	
Services		173.948		174.701	2.7	0.4	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		143.535		144.564	-1.1	0.7	
All items less medical care ⁽¹⁾		153.603		154.346	0.1	0.5	
Commodities less food		112.491		113.812	-6.2	1.2	
Nondurables		146.836		148.161	-4.0	0.9	
Nondurables less food		139.521		141.524	-8.5	1.4	
Services less rent of shelter		170.159		171.082	2.0	0.5	
Services less medical care services		173.677		174.143	2.3	0.3	
Energy ⁽¹⁾		188.531	185.204	191.973	-17.8	1.8	3.7
All items less energy		151.622		152.368	2.0	0.5	

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015	May 2015	May 2014	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015
All items less food and energy ⁽¹⁾		151.879		152.656	2.2	0.5	

(1) Indexes on a November 1996=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a November 1997=100 base.

(3) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(4) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

(5) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.